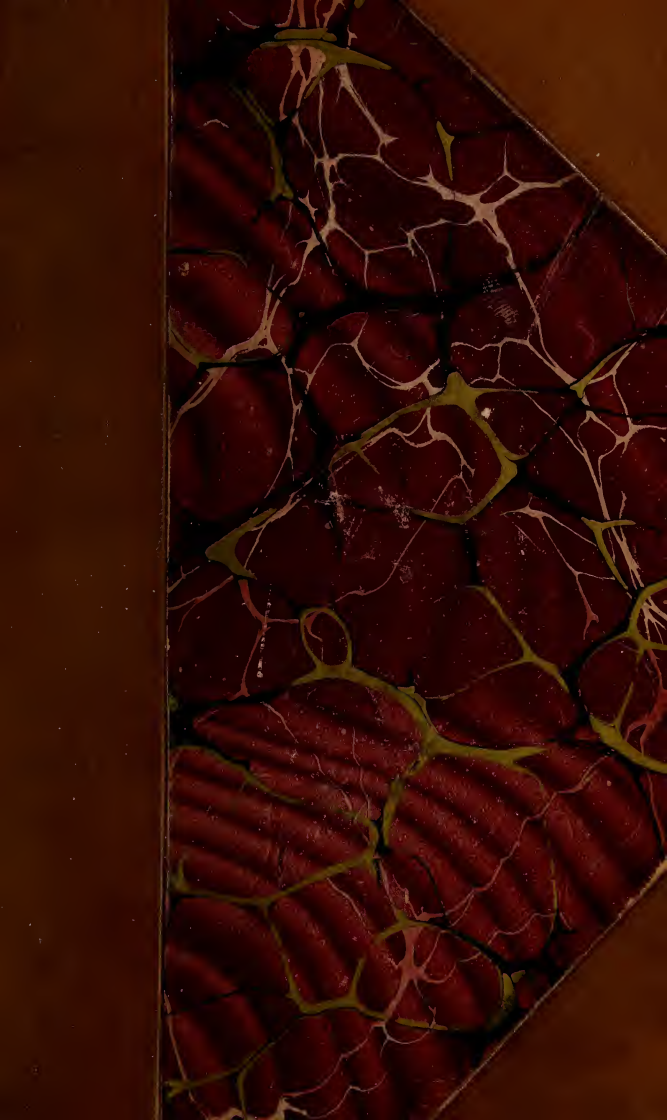




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THE
L I F E

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR ROBERT PEEL;

CONTAINING A

SKETCH OF HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE, EARLY LIFE,

POLITICAL CAREER, &c.

GLASGOW :

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

1851.

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LIFE OF SIR ROBERT PEEL.

SIR ROBERT PEEL was born at Bury, on the 6th of February, 1788. His early education was superintended by his father, who kindled the flame of ambition in his breast, by pointing out to him the example of Mr. Pitt, who, when just emerging into manhood, had been appointed to preside over the destinies of the British empire. The great object of the child's desires was to emulate Pitt, and he devoted himself to study with an eagerness and attention which could not fail to ensure success. At the proper age, he was sent to Harrow, where he had Lord Byron for a cotemporary. The noble poet has given the following account of his school-fellow.

“Peel, the orator and statesman (that was, or is, or is to be,) was my form-fellow, and we were both at the top of our remove (a public-school phrase.) We were on good terms; but his brother was my intimate friend. There were always great hopes of Peel amongst us all, masters and scholars, and he has not disappointed them. As a scholar, he was greatly my superior; as a declaimer and actor, I was reckoned at least his equal; as a schoolboy, *out* of school, I was always *in* scrapes, and *he* never. And *in* school he *always* knew his lesson, and I rarely; but when I knew it, I knew it nearly as well. In general information, history, &c. I think I was his superior.”

On quitting Harrow, he became a gentleman-commoner of Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his degrees with great distinction, having, in 1808, obtained double first class honors, in classics and mathematics.

Having completed his education, his father procured for him a seat in Parliament, and, in 1809, when only 21 years of age, he was returned for Cashel, and took his seat in the House of Commons for that borough. He delivered his maiden-speech in the year 1810, seconding the address to the throne; the modesty and ability he displayed were deservedly admired, and he was generally regarded as one of the most promising young statesmen of the day.

After having acted for some months, as under Secretary of State in the colonial department, Mr. Peel was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, in Sept. 1812, and held that office till the year 1818, when he resigned. His Irish administration was not very popular; he was identified with the high Protestant party, and his conciliating manners, though combined with unimpeachable personal conduct, did not save him from the severe animadversions of his political opponents. Mr. Peel was early attacked by Mr. O'Connell, particularly on occasion of the veto project,—one of Mr. Pitt's schemes for consolidating the Union of England and Ireland, to concede a qualified emancipation of the Catholics, provided the crown should have a vote on the appointment of Catholic Bishops. This arrangement was approved of at Rome, but Mr. O'Connell denounced it as a "disgraceful compromise of an indefeasible British right." "And whom," said he, "are we to have at the head of this commission? Why, that ludicrous enemy of ours, who has got, in jest, the name he deserves in earnest, 'Orange Peel,' a raw youth squeezed out of the workings of I know not what factory in England." On Sir Henry Parnell's motion, in favour of the Catholic claims, Mr. Peel revenged himself for this sarcasm, by quoting several violent passages from Mr. O'Connell's speeches, interspersed with some cutting remarks of his own. Mr. O'Connell was very wroth, and the next time he spoke in public, made

use of the following language :—" Mr. Peel would not dare in my presence, nor in any place where he was liable to personal account, to use a single expression derogatory to my character or honour." Mr. Peel having sent a message to Mr. O'Connell, saying that he held himself personally responsible for what he had uttered in the House of Commons, a hostile meeting was appointed to take place at Ostend, where Mr. Peel and his seconds soon arrived ; but Mr. O'Connell was arrested in passing through London, and bound, in heavy sureties, not to leave the kingdom. The affair here ended ; but the personal dislike between them continued, and the Agitator used to assail Mr. Peel unsparingly, whenever an opportunity offered itself.

In 1817, Mr. Peel brought in a bill for introducing a more effective system of police in Ireland, and although the measure was strongly opposed at the time, it has since been found a very beneficial change. The only remnant of its unpopularity, is that the Irish policemen still retain the nickname of "Peelers." About this time a vacancy having occurred in the representation of the University of Oxford, the seat was conferred on Mr. Peel, and he was thus placed in a position to command great influence in Parliament. During the discussion of the change in the monetary system of the country, he displayed great financial talents, and superior readiness as a debater. Not less remarkable was the courage with which he met the menacing prophecies of those who opposed the measure, though his own father was among the number.

For the reformation effected in the Criminal Code of the country, we are indebted to Mr. Peel. To mitigate its severity, he brought in no less than five bills, the whole of which were passed into law, and his exertions in this instance alone, even if he had performed no other services, entitled him to the eter-

nal gratitude of his country. We may here record a domestic event in the life of Mr. Peel. On the 8th of June, 1820, he was married, at Upper Seymour Street, London, to Julia, youngest daughter of General Sir John Floyd. The bride was in her twenty-fifth, and the bridegroom in the thirty-third year of his age.

In January, 1822, Mr. Peel was installed at the head of the Home Department, where he remained till the spring of 1827, when the illness of Lord Liverpool broke up the administration, and Mr. Peel threw up office. His reason for doing so was, that, from the first moment of his public life, he had constantly resisted the extension of political privileges to the Roman Catholics. His opposition was founded on principle, and he could not hold connection with an administration likely to forward the claims of the Catholics. In January, 1828, Mr. Peel again became Home Secretary, under the Duke of Wellington as premier, and in the following year he proposed the great measure of Catholic emancipation, to which he had previously been strongly opposed. The charge of apostacy was loudly brought against him, but he defended himself with spirit and ability. He mainly rested his defence upon the repeated divisions in the House of Commons, in favour of the disputed claims. "Such," said Mr. Peel in his speech, "is the conclusion to which I found myself compelled by the irresistible force of circumstances: and I will adhere to it, aye, and I will act upon it, unchanged by the scurrility of abuse—by the expression of opposite opinions, however vehement or however general—unchanged by the deprivation of political confidence, or by the far heavier sacrifice of private friendships and affections. Looking back upon the past, surveying the present, and fore-judging the prospects of the future, again I declare that the time is come when this question must be settled. I shall follow the example

of the pilot, who does not always steer the same course to guard the ship from danger, but a different course under different circumstances, as they arise, in order to save the vessel from the very dangers which the captain and crew have most dreaded." The measure was carried triumphantly, and it was followed by another of great importance, viz., the establishment of a regular system of police in the metropolis to supersede the old plan of parochial watching. The rural districts and large towns were soon included in the general protection, and the working of this grand system has vindicated the policy which introduced it.

On the death of his father, (3d May, 1830,) Mr. Peel succeeded to the baronetcy, and to one of the largest private fortunes possessed by any commoner in England.

The French revolution of 1830, occasioned a clamour for "Parliamentary Reform," which the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues were unable to control. Sir Robert Peel, as well as other leading statesmen of the time, was opposed to the extension of the representation. The House met on the 2d Nov., when the late Earl Grey urged the necessity of immediate reform in the representative system. The Duke of Wellington determined to oppose the measure, and the ministry, having been defeated in a question of confidence, in the House of Commons, resigned. It was succeeded by the celebrated "Reform Ministry," with Earl Grey at its head; and Sir Robert Peel became the leader of the Opposition. Although he strenuously resisted the Reform Bill in all its stages, and attempted to convince the House that it would not be productive of the benefits that so many imagined, he nevertheless acquiesced in the measure as soon as it became the law of the land; and laboured zealously, and in the end successfully, to construct a Conservative party. The first elections under the Reform Bill had reduced the Tory party to a very

small minority ; but Sir Robert Peel gradually reunited them, and developed the new plan by which he proposed to reinstate them in public opinion, and ultimately in political power.

In the autumn of 1834, Sir Robert, accompanied by Lady Peel, and some other members of his family, left England, with the intention of spending the winter in Italy, but while at Rome he was suddenly summoned by a special messenger to return home, and take the office of premier ;—the King having dismissed Lord Melbourne's cabinet. Sir Robert immediately left Rome, and on his arrival in London had an audience of his Majesty, accepted the office of Prime Minister, and, with a rapidity which surprised the public, as well as his political opponents, commenced to form his administration. He appealed to the country for support, on the ground that his former measures had shown a desire to improve ; but in the elections which followed, he failed to obtain a majority, and was obliged to resign in April, 1835. By the restoration of the Whigs, Sir Robert Peel was again thrown into the position of leader of the Opposition, and he had now occasion to develop the masterly tactics which had already increased his party, and which were destined, at no distant date, to place them again in power.

At a dinner given to Sir Robert Peel, on 12th May, 1838, he thus spoke of the changing fortunes of the Conservative party. “ In the session immediately following the passing of the Reform Bill, we never mustered on any division in the House of Commons, more than one hundred Conservatives ; now, I have the honour of addressing three hundred. On the first dissolution in 1835, when I was at the head of the Government, I believe we divided on the nomination of speaker, 306 members. The names attached to the invitation of this day, comprising 313 members of the House of Commons, will, I think,

sufficiently demonstrate that, notwithstanding adverse decisions to the contrary, the public confidence has not permitted our members to be reduced in consequence of the second dissolution."

The reinstated ministry continued till 1841, when, being defeated in their proposed relaxations of the duties on corn, &c., they appealed to the country by a dissolution. The decision of the constituencies having been against them, they were obliged to resign, and in September, 1841, Sir Robert Peel came into power, at the head of the strongest government that ever existed in the country. At this time, the concerns of the country seemed in inextricable confusion. The revenue was several millions below the expenditure; bad harvests, and other causes, had produced great distress in the manufacturing districts; and in Glasgow, Manchester, and Paisley, the most awful destitution prevailed. Sir Robert was sensible of the difficulties he had to encounter, and faced them with energy and resolution. One of his earliest measures, was a modification of the sliding-scale, which regulated the duties on the import of foreign corn, and this was followed by the relaxation of other restrictions in the commercial tariff, including the removal of prohibitory, and the reduction of protective duties. To meet his financial embarrassments, he proposed the Income Tax, and obtained an almost unanimous support for the measure. Addressing the late ministers, who objected to it, he exclaimed, "What have you done with the revenue I left you? In the year 1835, you found the affairs of the two great empires in this state: in the United Kingdom, the surplus of income over expenditure, was £1,376,000; in India, £1,556,000. You had then a nett surplus approaching to three millions! How have you left matters? You say I ever state the difficulties. Can you deny that you found a surplus of three millions, and have left a deficiency of five millions? On the 5th of

April, 1842, the deficit of the revenue of the United Kingdom, compared with its expenditure, was £2,570,000; of India, £2,430,000. The difference, then, against this country and its credit, is eight millions as compared with 1835!" It was soon evident that the tendency of Sir Robert Peel's policy, was towards an abolition of the taxes on food. The approaches to freedom of trade were gradual, and perhaps slow, but events occurred which compelled him to accelerate his progress. In most of the countries of Europe, the harvest of 1845 was deficient, and the failure of corn was aggravated by the mysterious disease which attacked the potato crop, and spread with alarming rapidity, particularly in Ireland, where that vegetable constitutes almost the only food of a great portion of the people. Alarmed by the prospect of famine in Ireland, and scarcity in England, Sir Robert Peel proposed that the ports should be thrown open, for the admission of provisions on the 1st of November, and that application should be made to parliament for a bill of indemnity; at the same time he intimated his intention of proposing the total abolition of the corn-laws. Finding himself opposed by a majority of his colleagues, Sir Robert Peel tendered his resignation, which her majesty reluctantly accepted. Lord John Russell was then invited to form an administration, but having failed in the attempt, Sir Robert resumed office, and again threw aside all personal motives in order to carry a measure, which circumstances had convinced him was necessary for the welfare of the country. His friend, the Duke of Wellington, expressed his determination to support him, by every means in his power; the other members concurred in the Duke's sentiments, and Sir Robert entered Parliament, bearing his corn-law repeal measures in his hand.

Sir Robert Peel said, in defending his change of opinion on the corn laws—"Power to effect great

objects is really valuable ; but for my part I can say with perfect truth, that even for those objects I do not covet it. Still I am ready to incur its responsibilities, to bear its sacrifices, to confront its perils ; but I will not retain it with mutilated power and shackled authority. I will not stand at the helm during dark and tempestuous weather, if that helm is not allowed to freely traverse ; and I will not undertake to direct the course of the vessel now by observations taken in 1842." To the taunt of inconsistency, he thus replied, "I will not withhold the homage due to the progress of reason, and to truth, by denying that my opinions on the subject of Protection have undergone a change. It may be supposed that there is something humiliating in making such an admission. Sir, I feel no such humiliation ; but I should feel the deepest humiliation if, having changed or modified my opinions, I declined to acknowledge the change for the base fear of encountering the charge of inconsistency."

After a struggle of a few months, the commercial measures of the cabinet were carried by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament, and received the Queen's assent in person. Sir Robert Peel now felt that the time was come when he should resign. He was overthrown by a division upon the "Irish Coercion Bill," in which the regular Opposition and Protectionists joined to deprive him of office. In his last speech, he said, "I relinquish power with a more lively recollection of the support and confidence I have received during several years, than of the opposition which, during a recent period, I have encountered. I shall leave a name severely censured, I fear, by many who, on public grounds, deeply regret the severance of party ties. I deeply regret that severance, not from interested or personal motives, but from the firm conviction that fidelity to party engagements, the existence and maintenance of a great

party—constitutes a powerful instrument of government. I shall surrender power severely censured also by others, who, from no interested motive, adhere to the principle of protection, considering the maintenance of it to be essential to the welfare and interests of the country. I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist, who, from less honourable motives, clamours for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit; but it may be, that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with feelings of good will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with injustice.” Loud cheers greeted the delivery of these words, and as he left the House on the evening of his resignation of office, (29th June, 1846,) he was awaited outside, by a multitude of people, whose enthusiastic plaudits accompanied him to his house, in Whitehall Gardens. Sir Robert Peel might now be said to have taken leave of office, but there were many who hoped to see him minister again, for it was pretty generally admitted, that he was the man best qualified to govern the country. He, however, knew that it was his farewell speech.

A writer on this event makes the following observations:—“That which he did not and could not know, was the full nobleness of the position which he would henceforth hold. He had nothing more to attain. His wealth had always been great, and it was not in the power, even of the sovereign, to enoble him. His honours are of a higher order than those of the peerage, and would be rather impaired than enhanced by his removal from among the Commons. In the Commons he has no party, because there is no party there; and if there were, he has withdrawn from party conflict. He speaks as from his own

mind, and his words have singular weight. He sits in the legislature, a man free from personal aims of every kind, at full leisure, and in full freedom to cast light where it is wanted on any hand, to give guidance and sanction, and material for speculation and action in future years, when he will be no more seen in his place. Men of all parties seem to agree on one point in regard to Sir Robert Peel,—that his last position in the British Legislature is the noblest that, in our period of time, can be held by any man.”

From this period, Sir Robert Peel may be said to have occupied the position of Moderator of the House of Commons, supporting the ministry in every way, to enable them to carry out the new commercial policy; and it is remarkable, that the only occasion on which he opposed them, occurred the night before the accident which resulted in his death. On Saturday afternoon, the 29th of June, 1850, not more than ten hours after delivering a brilliant speech, condemnatory of Lord Palmerston's foreign policy, Sir Robert Peel rode out for exercise, attended by his groom. Having called at Buckingham Palace, and entered his name in her Majesty's visiting book, he proceeded up Constitution Hill, when his horse became restive, and Sir Robert was instantly thrown over its head, and fell heavily on his face. Having retained hold of the bridle, the animal was suddenly checked, and fell with force above the right honourable baronet. He was immediately raised by three gentlemen who saw the accident; and in answer to their question, as to whether he was much hurt, he replied, “Yes, very much.” While a carriage was being procured, he became unconscious, and remained in that state for a few minutes after he had been placed in the carriage. They had not proceeded far, when Sir James Clark, having heard of the accident, came to see if he could render any assistance. Dr. Foucart, one of the gentlemen who had first raised Sir Robert

Peel from the ground, requested Sir James to accompany them to Whitehall, which he at once consented to do. On being lifted out of the carriage at Whitehall Gardens, Sir Robert was able, with assistance, to walk into the house, where Lady Peel, and the other members of the family awaited his arrival with the greatest anxiety. Lady Peel was overwhelmed with emotion, and the effect of the meeting on Sir Robert was so painful, that he swooned in the arms of Dr. Foucart, and was placed on a sofa in the dining room, from which apartment he was never removed. Immediately after the accident, Prince Albert, accompanied by the Prince of Prussia and Prince George, arrived at Sir Robert's residence, to make inquiries. The Duke of Wellington also called. Lord Palmerston was one of the first of the nobility who sent to ask for Sir Robert.

Till a late hour on Saturday evening, the calls of the nobility and gentry were incessant, and during the whole of the following day, the large space of Whitehall Gardens, was filled by a vast multitude of people, anxious to ascertain the condition of the Right Honourable Baronet. Several favourable bulletins were issued, and, up to Tuesday morning, hopes were entertained of his recovery; but during the day, the symptoms became more alarming, and all the members of his family were introduced to take a last farewell. Shortly after 10 o'clock, it was announced that Sir Robert Peel was getting rapidly worse, and at nine minutes after 11, the distinguished statesman expired. Intelligence of the melancholy event was immediately forwarded to Buckingham Palace, and to such of the family connexions as resided in the country. On the 9th of July, the mortal remains of Sir Robert Peel were interred in the vault of the Parish Church at Drayton Bassett; and, according to his own express desire, the funeral took place without ostentation or parade of any kind.

This country has perhaps never partaken of a more wide spread sentiment of sorrow, than upon the removal from among us, of one of our greatest statesmen. Within twenty-four hours, the announcement of Sir Robert Peel's death, passed from hand to hand, and from mouth to mouth, in every town and hamlet throughout the length and breadth of the land, and was everywhere received with one pervading emotion of serious and unaffected regret. He has left behind him a renown which will still increase, for the great measures with which his name is associated, are destined to be further developed. We have already mentioned, that he had given up all idea of resuming office, but he exercised a power of a higher description, and one universally acknowledged ; in all public affairs, and, particularly in home affairs, he had almost the influence of an oracle. Nor was that influence confined to our own country. The manner in which he understood and practised the law of nations, is of a nature to inspire the whole of Europe with a sense of his loss. Peace and civilization are deprived of one of their admirable defenders, and it may be safely predicted, that all parties in their turn will one day miss him, and even his opponents will cherish the memory of his customary presence and constant parliamentary labours.

The first time the House of Lords met, after the death of Sir Robert Peel, and before public business began, Lord Lansdowne spoke as follows :—" My Lords, it is quite true, that when we look around this place we do not feel the loss of any important person; there is no great blank in this place ; but we are all deeply made aware of a loss which has occurred in another assembly, with which we are connected by so many ties and relations, political and personal. Breathing as we do the same atmosphere, and daily occupied with the same objects, any occurrence deeply affecting the interests and proceedings of that assem-

bly cannot do otherwise than extend its influence to ours. My lords, we all must be aware that to that assembly there has befallen a great calamity in a great personal loss; and it would be extraordinary indeed if the deep voice of sorrow which has been raised there did not find an echo within these walls. My lords, as it appears to me, it is not the time to sit in judgment upon the political conduct—upon the public actions—of any great statesman the moment his presence is withdrawn. The conduct of every great public man, must abide the judgment of posterity—the actions of one generation must submit to the judgment of another, perhaps better qualified, by being farther away from the scenes of those actions, to contemplate and survey them in all their bearings and in all their results. But, my lords, there is one tribute at least due to the past exertions and final close of that distinguished public man's life, the value of which is important in proportion as it is instantaneous, that is, my lords, the expression of public sympathy unasked, unsolicited, unsought for—from all quarters and from all classes of society, attending—I wish I could add, cheering—the dying moments of such a man. Such sympathy and such feelings are unmixed with political opinions, and it is evident that your lordships are no less disposed than every other class of the community to offer your condolence on this melancholy occasion. For myself, I can only say that it has been my fortune, from a prolonged life, to witness the commencement and development of the career of the individual whom I must now unfortunately call the late Sir Robert Peel. I have witnessed his first exertions, and the commencement of that career which in the ordinary course of nature and human events I could not expect to see close. I have for more than forty years, perhaps more than many others, but certainly for a much longer time than many others, been made aware of the unremitting zeal with

which the life of that eminent man has been exclusively devoted (devoted more than that of any other person) to public objects and to the service of the State, bringing to that service the greatest and most distinguished talents, equally great and equally distinguished in business and in debate. And, my lords, such having been the case, such exertions having been continued to the last, it would be impossible to witness that sudden and unexpected close to such a life so employed, without that passing expression of sympathy, sorrow, and condolence, with which I believe all persons in the country, and more especially all those connected with its legislation and public proceedings, have witnessed the event that has filled their hearts with sorrow, and their minds with apprehension. My lords, I will say no more; what has been felt in the assembly of which he was a member, is felt here, and is felt throughout the country. And I persuade myself that, however feebly, I have but given vent to your lordships' feelings, as well as my own, when I have endeavoured that such a loss should not pass unnoticed in this House." His lordship was listened to with the greatest attention, and every sentiment he uttered received a ready and affecting response from the House.

Lord Stanley next rose and said—"Great as is the public loss which we have sustained, and universal as is the sympathy manifested by the whole country at the calamity which has just occurred, I did not anticipate that in this House, of which Sir Robert Peel was not a member, the noble marquis would have called for an expression of public feeling, or would have adverted, as he has done, to this lamentable occurrence. But, my lords, as the noble marquis has adverted to the case, I cannot deprive myself of the melancholy gratification of declaring how fully I participate in the feelings which the noble marquis has so eloquently expressed. The noble marquis truly

said, that this is no time to criticise the public acts of a public man snatched from the country in the prime of life, when he had the reasonable right to expect that many years remained to him, to be devoted with that great ability, that unflinching zeal, and that unwearied diligence, which we all know he devoted to the public service.

“It has been my fortune at some times to be opposed, and at other times to be the colleague in office of the late Sir R. Peel. It has been my deep regret that, during the last four years of his life, I have been separated from him by a conscientious difference of opinion on an important matter of public policy. It is with deep regret that I know that difference prevailed between us up to the last period of his valuable life. But it is a satisfaction for me personally, my lords, to know that, whatever political difference there was between us, there was no personal hostility on either side. I am confident that there has been none on my side—quite as confident that there has been none on his. I never was one of those who attached unworthy motives to a course of conduct which I cannot but deeply lament. I believe that in that step which led me to differ from him, he was actuated by a sincere and conscientious desire to obtain that which he believed to be a public good. Mistaken as he was in that view, I am satisfied that upon that occasion, as upon all others, the public good was the leading principle of his life, and that to promote the welfare of his country he was prepared to make, and did actually make, every sacrifice. In some cases those sacrifices were so extensive, that I hardly know whether the great and paramount object of his country's good was a sufficient reason to exact them from any public man.

“But this is not a time to speak of differences—to speak of disagreements. A great man and a great statesman has passed away from us by the sudden

and inscrutable dispensation of Providence. He has left in the other House of Parliament—he has left among his compeers—he has left in this country—a great void, a great blank. We are deprived of the services of that great, powerful, laborious intellect—of that unflinching diligence—of that unsparing application of all his best talents, his strength, his health, and all his great powers to the interests of his country. This is a moment at which all political considerations have ceased—in which the most solemn feeling is a fixed impression of the vanity of all human hopes and ambition, and of the instability of those things on which the destinies of nations depend, and in which we are bound to recollect that we are in the hands of Him who rules the destiny of men for ever and ever.

“In the feeling which I have just expressed I know that I shall be joined by your lordships and the country at large. I am sure that I shall be joined by universal Europe in the regret which I express for the sudden bereavement which has befallen his family, for the great loss sustained by his country, and for the sudden removal from the world of one who in private life was universally admitted to be in the possession of every virtue, and to be strictly unimpeachable. No one will deny to my lamented friend the praise of having been an able, an assiduous, and a conscientious servant of his country.”

Lord Brougham then addressed their lordships, to the following effect:—“For forty years I had the fortune of being generally opposed to Sir Robert Peel on most political questions. I live to acknowledge cheerfully and conscientiously the splendid merits of that eminent individual, and to be convinced that upon the subjects on which we differed from each other, he acted from the most pure and conscientious motives. At the last stage of his public career, chequered as it was—and I told him in private that

chequered it would be—when he was differing from those with whom he had been so long connected, and from purely public-spirited feelings was adopting a course which was so galling and displeasing to them—I told him, I say, that he must turn from the storm without to the sunshine of an approving conscience within. Differing as we may differ on the point whether he was right or wrong, disputing as we may dispute on the results of his policy, we must all agree that to the course which he firmly believed to be advantageous to his country he firmly adhered, and that in pursuing it he made sacrifices compared with which all the sacrifices exacted from public men by a sense of public duty, which I have ever known or read of, sink into nothing.”

The Duke of Wellington, who could not refrain from tears, spoke as follows :—“ My lords, I rise to give expression to the satisfaction with which I have heard this conversation on the part of your lordships, both on the part of those noble lords who were opposed to Sir Robert Peel during the whole course of their political lives, and on the part of those noble friends of mine who have only been opposed to him lately. Your lordships must all feel the high and honourable character of the late Sir Robert Peel. I was long connected with him in public life. We were both in the councils of our Sovereign together, and I had long the honour to enjoy his private friendship. In all the course of my acquaintance with Sir Robert Peel, I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence, or in whom I saw a more invariable desire to promote the public service. In the whole course of my communication with him, I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth, and I never saw in the whole course of my life the smallest reason for suspecting that he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact. My lords, I could not

let this conversation come to a close, without stating that which I believe to have been the strongest characteristic feature of his character. I again repeat to you, my lords, my satisfaction at hearing the sentiments of regret which you have expressed for his loss."

Similar tributes of respect to his memory were rendered by the House of Commons. Lord John Russell, with the sanction of Her Majesty, proposed that the remains of Sir Robert Peel should be interred with public honours among the mighty dead in Westminster Abbey; but Mr. Goulbourn, one of the executors of his late lamented friend, and as authorised by his family, respectfully, but firmly declined the proffered honour. He said,—“I speak not only in my own name, but in that of Sir Robert Peel's family, when I say I feel deeply the honour of such a proposition, suggested by the Crown, and responded to by the general feeling of the House. But I may be permitted to state this—that those who were unaquainted with the late Sir Robert Peel, can know but little of the simplicity of his character. If ever there was a man who was distinguished by a desire to avoid pomp and ostentation, that individual was Sir Robert Peel, and he particularly deprecated pomp and ostentation in connection with funeral ceremonies.”

Her Majesty, anxious to show the sense entertained of the services rendered to the crown by Sir Robert Peel, offered to ennoble his family, but Lady Peel respectfully informed the Queen, that her own wish was to bear no other name than that by which her husband was known to the world, and that, besides, a special direction was left by Sir Robert Peel, that no member of his family should, after his death, accept any title as a public reward, on account of any services he might be supposed to have rendered the state. Twice in his life time did he refuse the “blue

ribbon." His ambition was above such toys, and he preferred to write his name on the history of his country, so that it should be remembered with feelings of good will by the people from whom he sprung, and whose welfare he had so much at heart. No man has perhaps done more for rendering our collections of the works of genius accessible to the working classes. It has been stated that our artizans could not, like those of other countries, be trusted with admission to ornamental grounds, museums, or galleries of art; but Sir Robert Peel always reprobated the assertion. "It is not," said he, "the intelligent artizan, but the vulgar rich, who deface and injure statues, pictures, and ornamental trees."

Sir Robert Peel was a munificent patron of literature and the arts. He loved the society of the really great men of his time, and at his table might be seen many of the distinguished characters of whom posterity is likely to hear. During his administration, Southey received a pension of £300 a year, and was offered a baronetcy; Wordsworth received a pension of the same amount; £150 a year was given to James Montgomery, £200 a year was bestowed on Mr. Tytler, £200 a year on Mr. Tennyson, £200 a year on Mr. M'Culloch, and £100 a year on the widow of Thomas Hood. Frances Brown, the blind poetess, received also a pension at his hands. His patronage was extended to the children of persons eminent in literature. For the sons of Mrs. Hemans he found places under the Crown, which they still enjoy; and the first appointment of his first administration was given to a son of Allan Cunningham.

Sir Robert's love of the fine arts was equal to his taste for literature. Though he was an admirer of the works of the old masters, and possessed many splendid specimens of them, his patronage was chiefly extended to living artists. He was a liberal and extensive purchaser of their works, and his gallery of

distinguished living characters, painted expressly for himself, is perhaps the most extensive collection in the kingdom.

Of the case of poor Haydon we have good reason to speak. A few days before his suicide, he wrote to several high personages stating his distress. Sir R. Peel was, we believe, the only one of those he addressed who returned him an answer. His reply was prompt and considerate, and inclosed a cheque for £50, drawn from the Royal Bounty Fund. Early on the morning after Haydon's death, a friend of the artist addressed a letter to Sir R. Peel, stating the facts, and adding that the widow and family were wholly unprovided for. This letter he left at the Premier's residence, and walked on to Haydon's house. Scarcely had he entered, when a Treasury messenger arrived, with a letter from Sir Robert, expressing his regret for what had occurred, and begging that a cheque which he enclosed for £200, drawn from the Bounty Fund, might be devoted to the immediate relief of his family. Shortly afterwards he obtained for Mrs. Haydon a pension of £25 a year in the gift of Lady Peel, and another pension of £50 from the Queen, and sent £100 from his own purse to the subscription for the family. One of his last official acts was to give one of the sons a place in the Customs. These generous acts of Sir Robert Peel were revealed by chance, and were performed at a time when he was himself exposed to the jibes of his adversaries, and when it might have been supposed his thoughts were otherwise engrossed.

As an orator, Sir Robert Peel was prevented from taking the first rank on account of his deficiency in enthusiasm and passion. He was fluent, adroit, and convincing, but never exciting or overpowering; and what is still more to his credit, he never addressed an ill-tempered remark to an opponent, though he was very often coarsely assailed. "I have no time

to waste in bandying personalities with the honorable member," was all the notice he took of a good deal of abuse given him on a late occasion.

In private life there were few men more estimable than Sir Robert Peel. As a father, a husband, and a friend, he was such an one as England may well be proud of. His charities were without ostentation, and he was ever ready to alleviate the distresses of ill-requited genius.

Besides his widow, Sir Robert Peel has left seven children—five sons and two daughters. The eldest, Robert, has succeeded to the baronetcy, and has been elected member for Tamworth. Frederick represents Leominster. William is a captain in the navy. John Floyd Peel is an officer in the army. And the youngest son, Arthur Wellesley Peel, is still at college. Miss Peel married Viscount Villers a few years ago. Eliza, the youngest daughter, is unmarried. We cannot yet say how the vast property of the late baronet may be disposed of, but it will probably be divided among his children.

